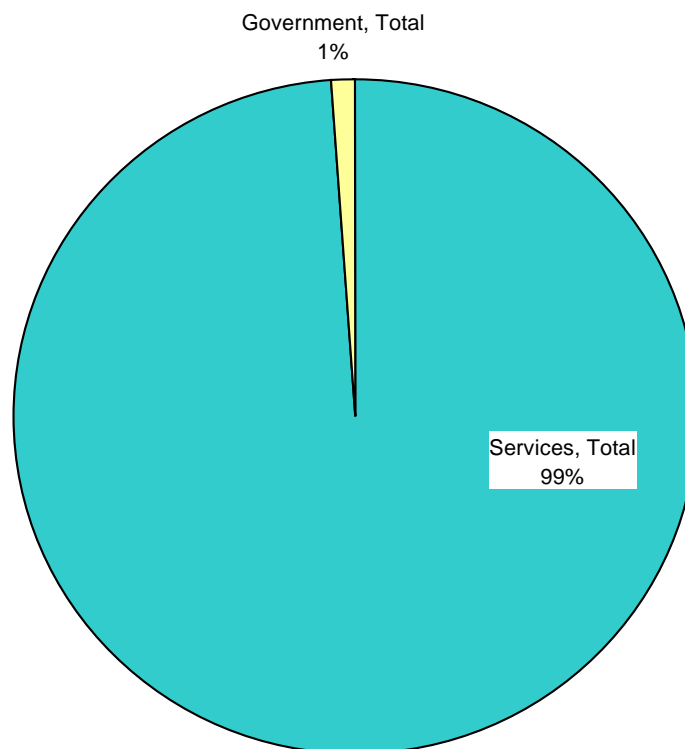


Job Description

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat teeth and tissue problems. They remove decay, fill cavities, examine x rays, place protective plastic sealants on children's teeth, straighten teeth, and repair fractured teeth. They also perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat gum diseases. Dentists extract teeth and make models and measurements for dentures to replace missing teeth. They provide instruction on diet, brushing, flossing, use of fluorides, and other aspects of dental care, as well. They also administer anesthetics and write prescriptions for antibiotics and other medications.

Dentists use a variety of equipment, including x-ray machines, drills, and instruments such as mouth mirrors, probes, forceps, brushes, and scalpels. They wear masks, gloves, and safety glasses to protect themselves and their patients from infectious diseases.

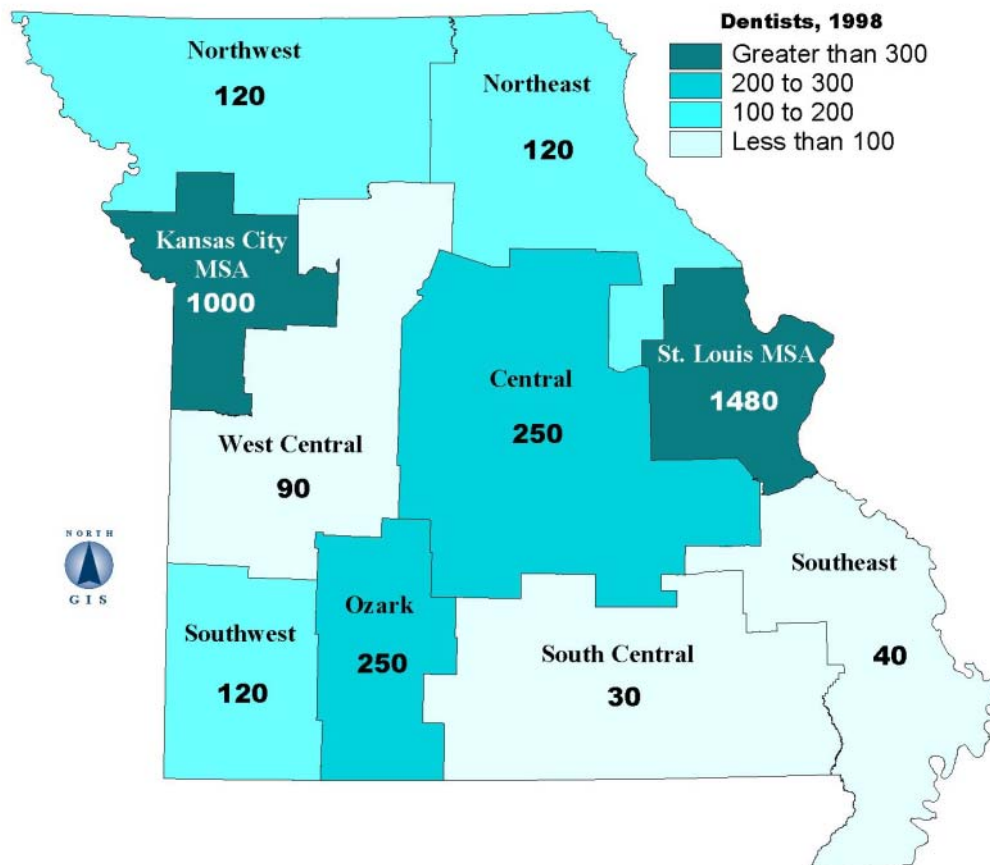
Employment by Industry



Employment Trends

Region	Employment		Projected Growth	Percent Change	Average Annual Openings
	1998	2008			
United States	160,000	165,000	5,000	3.1%	38,000
Missouri	2,550	2,500	-50	-2.0%	50
Northwest Region	120	100	-20	-16.7%	1
Northeast Region	120	100	-20	-16.7%	2
Kansas City MSA	1,000	900	-100	-10.0%	20
West Central Region	90	70	-20	-22.2%	2
Central Region	250	240	-10	-4.0%	5
St. Louis MSA	1,480	1,390	-90	-6.1%	30
Southwest Region	120	120	0	0.0%	3
Ozark Region	250	250	0	0.0%	5
South Central Region	30	20	-10	-33.3%	1
Southeast Region	40	30	-10	-25.0%	1

Source: Missouri Economic Research & Information Center, Projections Unit



Wage Information

Region	Average Hourly Wage	Average Annual Wage
United States	\$54.24	\$112,819
Missouri	\$58.93	\$122,574
Northwest Region	\$48.59	\$101,067
Northeast Region	N/A	N/A
Kansas City MSA	\$52.47	\$109,138
West Central Region	N/A	N/A
Central Region	\$43.23	\$89,918
St. Louis MSA	\$56.12	\$116,730
Southwest Region	N/A	N/A
Ozark Region	\$52.67	\$109,554
South Central Region	N/A	N/A
Southeast Region	N/A	N/A

Dentists in Missouri make \$122,574 per year, almost \$10,000 more than the national average. Because of the small numbers of dentists in rural areas of the state, not all regions have wage data for this occupation.

Source: Missouri Economic Research & Information Center, Occupational Employment Statistics Unit

Typical Tasks

- Fills, extracts, and replaces teeth, using dental instruments and appliances.
- Applies fluoride and sealants to teeth.
- Treats exposure of pulp by capping, removal, or root canal, using dental instruments.
- Treats infected root canal and related tissues.
- Fills pulp chamber and canal with endodontic materials.
- Eliminates irritating margins of fillings.
- Examines teeth, gums, and related tissues to determine condition.
- Formulates plan of treatment for patient's teeth and mouth tissue.
- Removes pathologic tissue or diseased tissue using surgical instruments.
- Restores natural color of teeth by bleaching, cleaning, and polishing.
- Analyzes and evaluates dental needs to determine changes and trends in patterns of dental disease. Counsels and advises patients about dental problems and preventive oral health care services.
- Fabricates prosthodontic appliances.
- Fits and adjusts prosthodontic appliances in patient's mouth.
- Produces and evaluates dental health educational materials.
- Plans, organizes, and maintains dental health programs.

Skills Needed

- Reading Comprehension
- Problem Identification
- Critical Thinking
- Science
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Active Learning
- Information Gathering
- Equipment Selection
- Solution Appraisal
- Active Listening

Preparation and Licensing Requirements

Necessary Education

- Bachelors Degree (4+ years at college or university) and
- Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) (additional 4 years)

Licensing

This occupation requires a license in Missouri. The Missouri Dental Board gives the licensing examination to candidates who have graduated from the appropriate programs and have passed both the National Board examination and the state or regional competency exam. Missouri's licensing examination tests on state laws and rules for the occupation.

Job Outlook

- Employment of dentists in Missouri is not expected to grow but will remain stable.
- Most job openings will result from the need to replace the large number of dentists projected to retire.
- Job prospects should be good if the number of people entering the occupation remains constant.

Dental care will focus more on prevention, including teaching people how to better care for their teeth. Dentists will increasingly provide care that is aimed at preventing tooth loss—rather than simply providing treatments, such as fillings. Improvements in dental technology will also allow dentists to provide more effective and less painful treatment to their patients. However, the employment of dentists is not expected to grow as rapidly as the demand for dental services. As their practices expand, dentists are likely to hire more dental hygienists and dental assistants to handle routine services.

For More Information

Missouri Economic Research & Information Center
Harry S Truman Building, Room 580
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 522-6261
<http://www.MissouriEconomy.org>

*Other Sources: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Missouri CHOICES, O*Net.*